

Value Added NEWSLETTER

Montana Department of Agriculture

March-April 2004

Montana Agriculture Development Council Announces Latest Round of Awards

The Montana Agriculture Development Council oversees the Montana Growth Through Agriculture Program; which is the Council's funding source for investing in appropriate projects. Nine agricultural development projects were recently awarded \$360,000. Projects approved at the December 2003 council meeting in Helena included both marketing and business development proposals and intend to provide investment funds to:

- Montana Tamale Company – *Montana Tamale production expansion project, Colstrip;*
- Peaks & Prairies Oilseed Growers Cooperative – *adding value to Montana grown oilseed crops, Malta;*
- Laid in Montana Emu Products – *expand distribution of emu oil and other Laid in Montana emu products, Kalispell;*
- Montana Mountain Smoke, Inc. – *development of marketing plan and marketing materials for smoked fish products, Montana City;*
- Lolo Peak Winery – *consultant services and winery production expansion, Missoula;*
- Cream of the West, LLC. – *product expansion with market enhancement, Harlowton;*
- Montana Farmers Union – *feasibility analysis of marketing Montana agricultural products in Sacramento, California, Great Falls;*
- Montana Cooperative Development Center, Inc. – *revolving capitalization fund for privatization, Helena; and*
- Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity – *feasibility analysis to assess conditions affecting rail freight competition in Montana and to analyze possibilities to improve rail freight competition, Helena.*

The next deadline for project applications to the Montana Growth Through Agriculture program is April 30, 2004. The council will review the January 31, 2004 deadline applications March 16-17, 2004 in Great Falls, Montana. For more information and application materials, contact Matt McKamey, GTA Program Manager of the Agriculture Marketing & Business Development Bureau at the Montana Department of Agriculture at 406-444-2402 or by email at agr@state.mt.us.

Value Added Opportunities

The Atkins diet, touting a high-protein and low carbohydrate diet, exploded onto the scene in 2003, spawning the entrance of low carbohydrate products into the food and beverage industry. New low carbohydrate product stores are opening every day across the nation, providing opportunities upon which small niche companies can capitalize.

The influx of Atkins-friendly products is evidenced by research indicating that low- or no-carbohydrate food and beverage products numbered 339 in 2002, compared to only 47 in 1999. Furthermore, according to Atkins Nutritionals, 12.7 percent of the U.S. adult population (or roughly 25.4 million people) either follows or claims to have tried the Atkins diet. Another 18.4 percent, or 36.7 million, say they plan to try Atkins.

To meet the demands of Atkins followers, Montana companies could tout the low-carbohydrate nature of products that are already sugar- and carbohydrate free, such as cheese and meat products.

With questions about Atkins or other value-added opportunities, contact Angelyn DeYoung at (406) 444-2402 or by email at agr@state.mt.us.

Free Nutritional Analysis

Montana companies can obtain a FREE nutritional analysis of food products, ready in two weeks, from Montana State University – Extension Nutrition. This could mean a savings of an average of \$800 in lab analysis fees. The resulting analysis complies with information necessary for state and FDA nutritional labeling requirements, and it's free.

For more information, contact Lynn Paul, Ed.D. RD, Montana State University – Extension Nutrition, (406) 994-5702, fax (406) 994-7300, email at lpaul@montana.edu. More information is also available at www.montana.edu/extensionnutrition/docs/nutritionanalysis.htm.

Thanks to MSU-Extension for this very valuable and cost-effective service for Montana's value-added businesses!

Business Development and Marketing Assistance

As in most small businesses, production of your products likely consumes most of your time, leaving little room for marketing and other vital business development activities. The Montana Department of Agriculture's Marketing and Business Development staff can help. We offer one-on-one individual consultations at your facility to discuss how we can help you develop and expand your company.

We will be visiting Billings area businesses on April 27–29; Glasgow area on May 12–14; and Miles City area on June 2–4. If you would like us to call on you and see your facility or to discuss your business needs, please let us know of your interest.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Angelyn DeYoung at 406-444-2402 or by e-mail at agr@state.mt.us. We look forward to assisting you with developing and expanding your businesses.

2004 Trade Shows

Specialty Food Industry

2-3	Apr	Made In Montana Show	Great Falls, MT	406-444-4392	Specialty food & gift products
2-4	May	Fancy Food and Confections	Chicago, IL	212-482-6440	Gourmet and confections
9-11	May	Gourmet Products Show	San Francisco, CA	800-272-SHOW	Gourmet food

Food Service & the Hospitality Industry

27-29	Jun	Southwest Foodservice Expo	Dallas, TX	800-295-2872	Food service industry
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Grocery & Convenience Store Industry

2-4	May	US Food Export Showcase	Chicago, IL	703-876-0900	Food and beverage products
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Gift Industry

27-30	Mar	Boston Gift Show	Boston, MA	914-421-3200	Gourmet and gift items
23-25	Apr	Billings Market Association	Billings, MT	406-652-6132	Gift & specialty food items
22-25	May	Int'l Jewelry Fair/Gen Merch.	New Orleans, LA	630-241-9865	Jewelry and general merchandise

Natural & Organic Trade Shows

22-25	Apr	Canadian Health Food Expo	Vancouver, BC, Canada	905-479-6939	Natural products industry**
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Industry-Specific Trade Shows

16-18	Mar	International Pizza Expo	Las Vegas, NV	812-949-0909	Pizza
14-17	Apr	National Craft Brewers	San Diego, CA	303-447-0816	Brewing industry

Financial Deadlines

April 30	GTA Investment App. Deadline*	MT Dept. Agriculture	406-444-2402	Value-added financial assistance.
April 30	Trade Show Assistance App. Deadline*	MT Dept. Agriculture	406-444-2402	Financial assistance to attend shows.

*Please contact the Montana Department of Agriculture for more information.

** For booth space and shipping details, contact Sarah Goan at 406-444-2402 or at agr@state.mt.us.

Montana Department of Agriculture and Montana Department of Commerce Host Export Readiness Seminars

Montana companies interested in exporting agricultural or food products internationally can take the first step toward successful exporting and get one-on-one help at export readiness seminars scheduled for March 2004.

"There are a number of issues businesses need to address before successfully expanding into the world market," says Ralph Peck, director of the Montana Department of Agriculture. "Success can depend on pricing exports for international markets, ensuring products reach the right customers in target countries, verifying that product labels are appropriate for country access, and many other country specific issues."

Export readiness seminars sponsored by the Montana Department of Agriculture and Montana Department of Commerce in conjunction with The Western US Trade Association (WUSATA) provide one-on-one sessions with international marketing sales and logistics staff. During the two-hour private consulting sessions, processors can receive answers to marketing, transportation, labeling and pricing concerns.

The seminars are free of charge and will be held March 29-30, 2004, Great Falls, Montana. Space is available on a first come, first serve basis.

To register for the export readiness seminars or for more information, contact Sarah Goan, International Marketing Officer, at the Montana Department of Agriculture at (406) 444-2402, or by e-mail at agr@state.mt.us.

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Value Added NEWSLETTER

Montana Department of Agriculture

May-June 2004

Montana Agriculture Development Council Announces Latest Round of Awards

The Montana Agriculture Development Council oversees the Montana Growth Through Agriculture Program, which is the Council's funding source for investing in appropriate projects. Nine agricultural development projects were recently awarded a total of \$265,000. Projects approved at the March 2004 council meeting in Great Falls included both marketing and business development proposals and intend to provide investment funds to:

- The Orchard at Flathead Lake, LLP – *expansion of organic cherry processing and marketing, Kalispell;*
- Kimm Seed Potatoes – *integrate manure feasibility and commercialization, Manhattan;*
- Big Sky Quality Wool LLC – *expansion of worsted wool mill and marketing, Broadus;*
- Mountain Lake Fisheries – *development of marketing plan and marketing materials for whitefish caviar, Columbia Falls;*
- Pintlar Peaks Seasoning and Dressing – *consultant services and marketing material development, Butte;*
- Montana Stockgrowers Association – *cooperative beef promotion across Montana, Helena;*
- Accurate Freeze Branding LLC – *consultant services and marketing material development for the ACCUFreeze System, Anaconda;*
- Wiota, LLC – *business development plan for financing expansion of Wiota bay handling equipment, Nashua; and*
- Hillside Farms Dairy – *feasibility and expansion of Hillside Dairy Farms, Charlo.*

The next deadline for project applications to the Montana Growth Through Agriculture program is July 31, 2004. The council will review the April 30, 2004 deadline applications June 7-8, 2004 in Lewistown, Montana. For more information and application materials, contact Matt McKamey, GTA program manager of the Agriculture Marketing & Business Development Bureau at the Montana Department of Agriculture at 406-444-2402 or by email at agr@state.mt.us.

2004 Trade Shows

22-25 May	Int'l Jewelry Fair/Gen Merch.	New Orleans, LA	630-241-9865	Jewelry and general merchandise
27-29 Jun	Southwest Foodservice Expo	Dallas, TX	800-295-2872	Food service industry

Montana's Choice 2004

The 2004 Montana's Choice promotion will run May 19 through June 1, 2004, in Albertson's across the state. On May 27, 2004, the department will host a kickoff press conference at the Montana Avenue Albertson's in Helena, promoting the Montana's Choice statewide activities. Montana companies with product in the Montana Avenue Albertson's are invited to provide samples of their products to the press conference participants and customers throughout the day. Due to the immense time and monetary resources statewide in-store promotions require, the department will host only one in-store promotion in Helena for the kickoff.

Television and radio announcements will be run during the promotion, encouraging Montanans to seek out Montana products, using the Montana's Choice logo as a guide. Furthermore, in-store items such as shelf talkers, shopping lists and bag stuffers encourage customers to purchase and will help them find Montana products. Each Albertson's in Montana will also feature a display of Montana's Choice products, highlighting the array of our state's products available in their store.

In order to increase customer awareness, every time a customer uses the Albertson's Preferred Savings Card (PSC) and purchases a Montana product, they will receive a special message on their receipt. The message will say, "Thank you for purchasing Montana's Choice products! Your purchases of Montana products help our economy!"

We look forward to another successful Montana's Choice promotion. With questions, contact Angelyn DeYoung, 406-444-2402, adeyoung@state.mt.us.

Governor's Agriculture and Tourism Mission Delivers Positive Message About Montana to Business Partners in the Pacific Rim

Montana Governor Judy Martz led an agriculture and tourism delegation on a nine day mission to Japan and Taiwan. The delegation had 24 meetings with importers, companies, commodity groups, government officials, educational institutions and business organizations over the course of the mission.

Highlights of the business-packed trip started off in Seattle, Washington, on April 15, 2004, with meetings with Columbia Grain International where president Tom Hammond emphasized the demand for Montana origin wheat by their overseas customers. Later in the day the group was hosted by the Taipei Economic and Cultural Affairs Office in Seattle, where Director General Jack C.K. Chiang and his staff reiterated their commitment to working with Montana and promoting agricultural and business trade, tourism and cultural relationships. The next morning, prior to departure for Taipei, Taiwan, Governor Martz and several delegates met with Japan Consul General Tadahiro Abe and discussed the Japan market and relations with the U.S.

In Taipei, Taiwan, delegates met with the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF), the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT), the Montana Asia-Pacific Trade Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), China Grain and Product Research & Development Institute, U.S. Wheat Associates and the Taiwan Millers Association. The high point of the day was an hour-long session between Governor Judy Martz and the newly re-elected Taiwanese President Chen. During the conversation, Governor Martz emphasized the need to open Taiwan's market to US beef and Montana's commitment to producing agricultural products that the Taiwan market wants: beef, wheat for milling, organic products and ingredients for processing.

The demand for Montana wheat in Taiwan was evident from meetings at the China Grain and Product Research & Development Institute, U.S. Wheat and the Taiwan Millers Association. Mr. Ching-Ho Huang, Secretary General of the Taiwan Flour Mills Association commented that 90 percent of the wheat being imported into Taiwan comes from the United States, of that quantity, 90 percent comes from Montana. He also noted that Taiwan millers received their first shipment of hard white winter wheat recently and suggested Montana growers consider producing hard white winter wheat.

Tokyo was the next stop on the agenda and the first meeting was with the Starzen Co. Ltd, Japan's largest meat merchandiser handling both imported and domestic meat supplies, and former owner of the Selkirk Ranch in Dillon. Starzen is a major importer of U.S. beef and president Mr. Uzurahashi stated he was hopeful that the market would reopen soon, and when it does, Starzen plans to resume importing U.S. beef.

In Osaka, agriculture delegates met with the Agricultural Trade Office for a briefing on trade opportunities in western Japan. Osaka ATO Director Emiko Purdy informed the delegation that they are organizing a reverse media mission to the States, now planned to include Montana, in late August, 2004, as part of a program to improve the Japanese public's opinion and knowledge of food safety in the United States and U.S. food production. A meeting followed with Japanese meat buyers and importers and the opportunity to put forward Montana's commitment to seeing the resumption of U.S. beef exports to Japan.

The last stop of the day in Osaka, also organized by ATO Osaka, was a tour for the delegation of a major regional grocery chain to accentuate the importance of packaging and product quality to the Japanese consumer. The final day of meetings took the delegation to the ATO Tokyo office for a briefing on the grain purchasing system in Japan by US Grains Council Japan Director Carey Sifferath and U.S. Wheat Associates Director Takeo Suzuki.

Agriculture delegates were able to meet with Nisshin Flour Milling, the largest miller in Japan, the first meeting between a Montana delegation and the Japanese milling company.

Governor Martz and the agriculture delegates were also able to visit Nippon Flour Mills Company Ltd, parent company to Great Falls-based Pasta Montana. Key company executives including CEO Hiroshi Sawada and Chief Executive Officer of Pasta Montana Katsutaro Nishihara were also in attendance. Mr. Sawada commented that this was a 'historic day' as it was the first time a Governor visited the company. Governor Martz and Mr. Sawada discussed Montana's long-standing relationship with Nippon and Pasta Montana's positive impact on Montana's economy and business community.

Financial Deadlines

July 31 GTA Investment App. Deadline*

MT Dept. Agriculture 406-444-2402

Value-added financial assistance.

July 31 Trade Show Assistance App. Deadline*

MT Dept. Agriculture 406-444-2402

Financial assistance to attend shows.

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MONTANA
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NEWSLETTER

Montana Department of Agriculture

July-August 2004

Montana Agriculture Development Council Announces Latest Round of Awards

The Montana Agriculture Development Council awarded a total of \$181,406.00 in Montana Growth Through Agriculture program funds at its June 2004 meeting in Lewistown. The Council, which oversees the Montana Growth Through Agriculture Program, reviewed nine agriculturally focused marketing and business development proposals and intends to provide investment funds to:

- Air Design, Inc. – *Business Development Plan, Scobey;*
- Great Falls Development Authority, Inc. – *Development of a Value-Added Commodity Park as a State Agricultural Park, Great Falls;*
- Plain-Vista Dairy – *Methane Recovery from Small Dairy Operations, Manhattan;*
- Country Mercantile at the “Pumkin Patch” – *Market Planning for Business Expansion, Fromberg;*
- On Thyme Gourmet Inc. – *Feasibility Study to Determine the Shelf Stability of On Thyme Gourmet Products, Bridger;*
- Western Montana Growers Cooperative – *Increase the Viability of Market Produce Farmers in Western Montana, Ronan;*
- Great Northern Growers Montana Producer Cooperative – *Feasibility Study and Marketing Research for Value-Added Producer Grown ProOatina Gluten Free Oat Products, Sunburst; and*
- Montana Organic Association – *Provide Financial Assistance for Start-Up and Conference Expenses for the Montana Organic Association, Helena;*

The next deadline for project applications to the Montana Growth Through Agriculture program is July 31, 2004. The council will review the July 31, 2004 deadline applications late in August, 2004. For more information and application materials, contact Matt McKamey, GTA Program Manager of the Agriculture Marketing & Business Development Bureau at the Montana Department of Agriculture at 406-444-2402 or by email at agr@state.mt.us.

Culinary Award for Excellence

Chefs from all over Montana were invited to participate in the first Culinary Excellence Award at Buck's T-4 Lodge on June 14, 2004 hosted by the Montana Department of Agriculture. The event was designed to assist Montana chefs and restaurant managers in featuring more Montana ingredients in their menu items. A total of nine chefs were chosen as finalists to compete in Big Sky.

A special highlight of the event was involvement by Katy Keck, a nationally recognized chef and culinary professional and journalist from New York City. Her accomplishments include styling culinary segments for The Rosie O'Donnell Show, The Today Show and Late Show with David Letterman. Ms. Keck participated as a chef competition judge and provided an address discussing national restaurant industry procedures and trends.

Another featured participant was Chef Dieter Doppelfeld, a Certified Master Chef and board member of the American Culinary Institute's National Chef Board. His accomplishments include working as an executive chef for the Westin hotels in Chicago and Anchorage, advising the University of Alaska on the creation of its food service department and directing the program there for 17 years. Most recently, Chef Doppelfeld was part of the faculty at the Culinary Institute of America's Greystone campus in Napa, California. Chef Doppelfeld judged the chef competition and spoke on the topic of recipe development.

Three gold awards were presented for best appetizer, best entree and best dessert. Chef Rick Hilles of Triple Creek Ranch in Darby won best appetizer and best dessert. Hilles' appetizer was Amaltheia Dairy goat cheese and beet terrine with pink lady apples and apple-pepper gastrique. His winning dessert was poached pear with Wilcoxson's mountain berry ice cream on a shortbread cookie drizzled with huckleberry and chocolate sauce.

The winning entree went to chef Eric Trager from Bridge Creek Back Country Kitchen in Red Lodge. His entree was Garden City Fungi morel and wild mushroom, stuffed Montana Legend Flat Iron steak with honey shallots, and Amaltheia Dairy goat cheese and scalloped potato tower.

For more information on the event contact Angelyn DeYoung at the Montana Department of Agriculture at 406-444-2402 or by email at agr@state.mt.us.

Montana Department of Agriculture Directories

The Montana Department of Agriculture is planning for the Agribusiness Resource Directory and the Montana Food & Beverage Directory inclusion forms to be sent in July 2004. Printing of the publications is set to start January 2005, at the beginning of the legislative session.

The Agribusiness Resource Directory is an important tool that is utilized by farmers, ranchers and agricultural businesses. It is a resource that includes Montana agricultural business owners who produce or supply Montana products. This publication, which has been distributed nationally and internationally, provides listings of Montana agricultural products suppliers as well as numerous state agricultural organizations.

The Montana Food & Beverage Directory is a list of producers and processors that vary in size, product and market reach. The Montana Department of Agriculture has developed the directory to provide a guide to food and beverage products produced within Montana.

Although both directory listings are extensive, the Department wants to ensure all agricultural products suppliers and processors are represented. If you know of any unlisted companies that wish to be included in future editions, please have them contact the Agricultural Development Division of the Montana Department of Agriculture at 406-444-2402, or via e-mail at agr@state.mt.us.

If you have any comments or questions about the directories or if the department can be of any assistance to you, please contact us.

Department of Agriculture Informational Booth Calendar

July 8-11	Chouteau County Fair, Fort Benton
July 15-18	Blaine County Fair, Chinook
July 22-25	Marias Fair, Shelby
July 29-Aug 1	Last Chance Stampede & Fair, Helena
Aug 3-7	Lake County Fair, Ronan
Aug 10-13	Sweetgrass County Fair, Big Timber
Aug 11-15	Great Northern Fair, Havre
Aug 18-22	Tri-County Fair, Deer Lodge
Aug 26-29	Eastern Montana Fair, Miles City
Sept 1-5	Ravalli County Fair, Hamilton

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